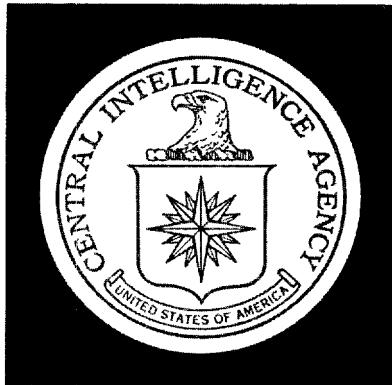


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*Panama: The refusal of National Guard Commandant Vallarino to recognize yesterday's impeachment conviction of President Robles has prompted opposition leader Arias to call for a nationwide general strike.

Arias' call for "civic resistance" over National Union (NU) media may account for the Guard's decision to move in on NU headquarters with tear gas this morning. An undetermined number of Arias followers were arrested, including NU Secretary General Nicosia. One Guard officer reportedly was killed in the clash.

A vote to remove Robles from office ended the National Assembly's four-week-old impeachment trial and left the country with two rival claimants for the presidency. General Vallarino issued a communiqué after the Assembly concluded its session stating that the Guard would not recognize the legislature's actions pending a decision on the legality of the impeachment proceedings by the Supreme Court when it reconvenes on 1 April.

Robles was found guilty of "electoral coercion" by 29 National Union deputies and was deprived of his political rights for a two-year period. The 12-member government bloc boycotted the session.

Following Robles' conviction, First Vice President Max Delvalle, an Arias supporter, was sworn in as chief executive by the Assembly president. To give the impression of an operating government, Delvalle appointed a cabinet and announced that another Assembly session would be convoked today to consider "special" matters submitted by executive order.

He reportedly intends to propose amendment of the electoral code. Vallarino, however, may take steps to prevent an Assembly meeting to avoid implying recognition of the "new" government.

Despite a ban on public demonstrations issued by the progovernment mayor of Panama City, an estimated 4,000

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Arias supporters gathered at NU headquarters yesterday while the Assembly was in session. National Guard units cordoned off the Assembly area, but did not attempt to enforce the mayor's edict. Vallarino's troops did succeed in hampering the movement of NU followers into Panama City, thereby reducing the size of the Arias turnout.

Thus far, there have been few signs of any sustained enthusiasm for the legal tug-of-war between the Robles government and the opposition-controlled Assembly. Sporadic acts of violence occurred in various parts of the country during the night, however, and radical elements on both sides can be expected to continue attempts to initiate disorders.

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Czechoslovakia: Liberals in Czechoslovakia have continued to press for further personnel changes and "democratic" reforms following the resignation of President Antonin Novotny and many of his followers.

Among those quitting posts in Novotny's wake were the deputy chairman of the National Assembly, Vaclav Skoda, and the minister of justice, Alois Neumann. The chairman and five members of the Central Control and Auditing Commission of the Communist Party central committee, several district party leaders, and some trade union and youth organization officers also resigned.

A number of other Czechoslovak officials are currently under fire by liberals, including Secretariat member Koucky and Foreign Minister David.

A Czechoslovak Communist Party official, meanwhile, has served notice that the party intends to continue its reforms. Cestmir Cisar, recently appointed to head the central committee's Department of Education, stated on 23 March that the "new atmosphere" created by the Communist Party since January "will become a permanent feature of Czechoslovak development."

Cisar said this is guaranteed by the fact that "a new party leadership is being formed and a party action program is being prepared."

Czech diplomats and Foreign Ministry officials are also emphasizing that Prague intends to seek good relations with all countries, including West Germany. The ambassador to the US, for example, has called attention to Deputy Foreign Minister Pudlak's statement that existing Czech - West German agreements could lead to extensive trade, tourist, and cultural relations.

Pudlak also implied that Prague might establish diplomatic relations with Bonn despite their basic differences.

Jordan-Israel: The border is generally quiet, although several exchanges of fire have occurred since the Israeli incursion on 21 March.

Tel Aviv's action almost certainly will make it impossible for King Husayn to take any strong measures in preventing future terrorist raids out of Jordan against Israel. In a press conference on 23 March, the King stressed the need for renewed Arab unity.

Emotion is still running high in Amman following the public funerals of those killed during last week's fray.

The UN Security Council last night unanimously passed a compromise resolution condemning Israeli aggression after Jordan reluctantly agreed to inclusion of the phrase "all violent incidents."

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